REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request that the instant Amendment, as well as the Amendment After Final filed on October 16, 2003 be entered. This submission includes a Request for Continued Examination and a Request for Two Months Extension of Time.

Claims 3 and 21 have been amended in the instant Amendment to recite rigid layer thicknesses of 0.8 mm to 2 mm and 0.8 to 1 mm respectively. Support for these amendments can be found, for example, at page 12, lines 7-10, and Examples 1-3. Claims 1-4, 6-13, and 15-27 are pending and at issue.

In the Advisory Action mailed November 20, 2003, the Examiner stated that the upper limit of rigid layer thickness recited in claims 1 and 19 appear to conflict with depending claims 3 and 21, which do not set an upper limit. Claims 3 has been amended to recite the upper limit set forth in claim 1, and claim 21 has been amended to recite the upper limit set forth in claim 19.

The Examiner also stated that the meaning of the term "profile fibers" is unclear. In response, Applicants note that the term "profile fibers" is discussed on page 10, lines 20-24 of the application, excerpted below:

The term profile fiber means a fiber having a non-circular cross-section. The cross-section of a profile fiber is, for example, an ellipse, an oval, a T-letter shape, a Y-letter shape, a +-mark shape, or a polygon.

Applicants respectfully submit that the meaning of the term profile fiber is clear.

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In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Dated: December 16, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

Jay. D. Lessler

Registration No.: 41,151 DARBY & DARBY P.C.

P.O. Box 5257

New York, New York 10150-5257

(212) 527-7700

(212) 753-6237 (Fax)

Attorney For Applicant